EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)[1] has assigned a continuing role to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in carrying out NNSA's national security mission. To enable LANL to continue this enduring responsibility requires that NNSA maintain the capabilities and capacities required in support of its national mission assignments at LANL. To carry out its Congressionally assigned mission requirements, NNSA must maintain a safe and reliable infrastructure at LANL. Upgrades to the various utility services at LANL have been ongoing together with routine maintenance activities over the years. However, the replacement of a certain portion of natural gas service transmission pipeline is now necessary as this delivery system element has been operating well beyond its original design life for the past 20 to 30 years and components of the line are suffering from normal stresses, strains, and general failures.

The Proposed Action is to grant an easement to the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) to construct, operate, and maintain approximately 15,000 feet (4,500 meters) of 12-inch (in.) (30-centimeter [cm]) coated steel natural gas transmission mainline on NNSA-administered land within LANL along Los Alamos Canyon. The new gas line would begin at the existing valve setting located at the bottom of Los Alamos Canyon near the Los Alamos County water well pump house and adjacent to the existing 12-in. (30-cm) PNM gas transmission mainline. The new gas line (owned by PNM) would then cross the streambed and continue east in a new easement obtained by PNM from the NNSA, paralleling the existing electrical power line along the bottom of the canyon. The gas line would then turn northeast near State Road (SR) 4 and be connected to the existing 12-in. (30-cm) coated steel gas transmission mainline, located within the right-of-way (ROW) of SR 502.

The Proposed Action would also involve crossing a streambed twice. PNM would bore under the streambed for pipe installation. PNM would also construct and maintain a service road along the pipeline easement. In addition, when construction is complete, the easement would be reseeded. Portions of the Proposed Action are located within potential roosting and nesting habitat for the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*), a Federally protected threatened species. Surveys over the last seven years have identified no owls within this area. The Proposed Action would be conducted according to the provisions of the LANL Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat Management Plan. Effects would not be adverse to either individuals or potential critical habitat for protected species. Cultural resources within the vicinity of the proposed easement would be avoided with the exception of an historic trail. However, the original trail has been affected by previous activities and no longer has sufficient historical value to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Minimal undisturbed areas would be involved in the Proposed Action. Most of the proposed easement follows an established ROW for the existing electrical power line. There are several potentially contaminated areas within Los Alamos Canyon; however, these areas would be avoided, where possible, or, if avoidance isn't possible or practicable under the Proposed Action, the contaminated areas would be sampled and remediated in accordance with New Mexico Environment Department requirements before construction.

[1] The NNSA is a separately organized agency within the Department of Energy (DOE) established by the 1999 *National Nuclear Security Administration Act* [Title 32 of the *Defense Authorization Act* for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65)].

Construction wastes would be trucked to a licensed commercial landfill or, in the case of excavated soils, could be reused for backfilling. Vegetation removed from the easement would be chipped and placed on site in such a way that it would not re-enter the floodplain. Construction activities for the proposed gas pipeline would be expected to produce only temporary and localized air emissions. Once construction is complete, operational emissions would return to background levels. Construction, operation, and maintenance of the new gas pipeline under the Proposed Action would have no effects on utilities and infrastructure, land use, transportation and traffic, and would have no adverse health effects on LANL employees or construction workers. There would be slight temporary effects to wetlands and floodplains.

Effects, if any, on the local geology as a result of the Proposed Action are expected to be minor and would consist of possible slope instability and increased erosion and sediment load. The Proposed Action may have slight short-term effects on water quality. Water used for leak testing the pipeline would be analyzed and found to be free of contaminants before being released on the easement. Best Management practices derived from the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be implemented to prevent erosion and to prevent fill material from entering the stream channel. Effects on visual resources would be minor and temporary. The Proposed action would result in limited short-term noise levels. Following completion of construction activities, the noise levels would return to preconstruction levels. LANL waste management would be slightly affected by the Proposed Action. PNM or their subcontractors would be responsible for site waste removal and disposition. LANL would accept only radioactive waste, if any.

Cumulative effects of the Proposed Action on LANL and surrounding lands, along with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, are anticipated to be negligible. Portions of the easement that are located within tracts of land designated for Conveyance and Transfer would either be used for cultural preservation were they to be transferred to San Ildefonso Pueblo; or kept as natural areas or used for transportation and utility improvements were they to be transferred to Los Alamos County. The feasibility and definition of an Advanced Hydrotest Facility is still insufficiently determined for NNSA DOE to propose such a facility. Hence there would not be any cumulative effects. Likewise, no cumulative effects are expected from the demolition and disposition of the Omega West Facility located approximately 2 miles (3 kilometers) upstream from the Proposed Action. Post Cerro Grande Fire and Technical Area 21 cleanup activities are expected to have long-term beneficial effects by reducing the likelihood of contaminant transport downstream. No increases in LANL operations are anticipated as a result of this action.

The No Action Alternative was also considered. Under this alternative PNM would not be granted an easement and would not construct and operate a new gas pipeline at LANL.